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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001712

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2018

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY SEEKING MORE INFO ON NTM-I BORDER SECURITY
LEAD NATION ROLE

REF: A. STATE 99701

[1](#)B. STATE 96122

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor A. Godfrey, reasons 1.4 b and d

[1](#)1. (C) We delivered ref a demarche to MFA Section Head for NATO Military Affairs M. Turker Ari on September 25. We noted that taking a lead role in the NTM-I border security mission would provide an additional opportunity for Turkey to engage with Iraq on and help support Iraq,s effort in strengthening border security. Ari said Turkey is still reviewing the proposal for Turkey to play a lead nation role in border security training under NTM-I but needed additional information to clarify the modalities and structure envisioned for such a role. Specifically, Ari asked for clarification on whether other Allies are planning to contribute in this effort, the total number of forces envisioned (in addition to the 20-30 Turkey would offer), the role,s scope and duration, infrastructure and support elements required and how that will be funded. He expressed hope that more information will be provided at the September 26 Manpower Conference hosted by SHAPE, and said Turkey will be in better position to take a decision once there is a clearer picture of the lead nation role,s modalities and requirements.

[1](#)2. (C) Ari reiterated Turkey,s commitment to NTM-I and to Iraq,s sovereignty, stability, and security. He said he expects that Turkey, at a minimum, will maintain its contribution of two officers in NTM-I, and said Turkey has been providing ongoing training to Iraqi officers at its Partnership for Peace Training Center in Turkey. According to Ari, 121 Iraqi officers have already received training from Turkey to date, and some of these officers participated in border security courses. He noted that 10 Iraqi officers have been invited to a December 1-5 border security course that will be held at the PFP Training Center in Turkey. Ari also mentioned Turkey,s willingness to consider sending mobile training teams to Iraq if the security condition remains stable. He emphasized that any support rendered by Turkey will be provided to the Iraqi Central Government.

[1](#)3. (C) As a follow-up to ref b demarche, which we delivered on September 10, Ari said Turkey was flexible in terms of the approach for extending the status protection of NATO forces participating in NTM-I. He said NATO ASG for Operations Martin Howard briefed GOT authorities during a September 21-23 visit that his preferred option is to extend the validity of the existing exchange of letters with the Government of Iraq. Ari said the GOT did not consider this

approach controversial.

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